THE RELEVANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO THE PERFORMANCE

OF GHANAIAN LUXURY HOTELS: THE ROLE OF SERVICE QUALITY,

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the relevance of Emotional Intelligence to service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and the performance of luxury hotels in Ghana. A quantitative research approach was used in this study. The target population was customers and customer attendants of the luxury hotels mainly in Accra. The simple random sampling procedure was used to select 181 each of customers and customer attendants in the selected luxury hotels. Self-administered questionnaires for customers and customer attendants were used to collect data from respondents. The study confirms that EI is strongly positively correlated to SQ at 5% significant level (r = .945, p < .05). Moreover, EI is strongly positively correlated to CS (r = .894, p < .05), CL (r = .804, p < .05) and ROI (r = .724, p < .05) at 5% significance level. Also, EI serves as a predictor of SQ, CS, CL and ROI. In addition, SQ, CS and CL significantly positively influences financial performance in the luxury hotel sector, but this effect considerably reduces when EI does not influence SQ, CS and CL. Thus, EI significantly influences the performance of luxury hotels in terms of financial performance through the mediation of SQ, CS and CL. Luxury hotels can therefore improve their financial performance through SQ, CS and CL by equipping their service personnel with EI and encouraging them to apply it in service delivery.

KEYWORDS: Relationship Marketing, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Financial Performance, Emotional Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Rationally, every organisation would want to achieve its short and long term market and financial targets to ensure Growth. Growth in an organisation is often a reflection of market success, more often in terms of sustainable customer patronage and market share. It is argued that sustainable market success and organisational growth in the services sector is based on customer satisfaction that serves as a foundation of customer loyalty (Ganiyu, 2012; Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005), where service quality is the root of customer satisfaction (Agyapong, 2012; Angelova & Zekiri, 2011). Though service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are popular subjects in marketing literature and are important to managements in practice, attainment of customer loyalty is often of a relatively higher priority to organisations owing to its long-term effect on marketing and the organisation at large (Gan, Cohen, Clemes, & Chong, 2006; Keiningham, Aksoy, Andreassen, Cooil & Wahren, 2006). Primarily, efforts to achieve service quality in the service organisation are geared towards customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty is viewed by marketers as the grand result of service quality (Gan et al., 2006; Angelova & Zekiri, 2011). In variably, customers' perceived service quality is a precursor to customer loyalty. Some writers also

identify it as a measure of the sustainability of patronage in the market (Kheng, Mahamad, Ramayah & Mosahab, 2010; Keiningham et al., 2014). In this respect, Kheng et al. (20110) content that customer loyalty is the final market indicator of success in terms of how sustainable customer patronage is. Practically, improved level of customer loyalty enhances patronage in the market, and this impacts financial performance in the organisation. This scenario is confirmed to be characteristic of all service sectors (Osman & Sentosa, 2013; Msoka & Msoka, 2014), but through a survey of literatures on the subject Liang (2008) found that the hotel sector more strongly relies on customer loyalty for survival.

Generally, empirical studies (e.g. Saeed, Niazi, Arif & Jehan, 2011; Saleem & Raja, 2014; etc.) have shown that customer loyalty is the basis of the growth of hotels. Moreover, customer loyalty is positively influenced by customer satisfaction (Gan, et al., 2006; Keiningham et al., 2006; Saeed, Niazi, Arif & Jehan, 2011; Saleem & Raja, 2014), where service quality is confirmed a primary driver of customer satisfaction (Ganiyu, 2012; Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005). In many studies, service quality and customer satisfaction are confirmed as significant moderators of customer loyalty (Gan et al., 2006). Evidently, the need for hotels to ensure a high level of customer retention to survive has been strongly acknowledged in the literature. This has been largely done in comparative studies that tend to reflect a stronger effect of customer loyalty on growth in the hotel sector relative to other sectors.

There is a school of thought that service quality; customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are more sensitive to firm performance in the hotel sector because of the multi-cultural nature of the customers of hotels (Liang, 2008). Unlike a bank which is likely to have a majority of its customers being the native people, hotels often have most or many of their customers who have foreign cultural backgrounds. A situation of this nature makes hotel success and performance more dependent on customer satisfaction and retention relative to other services sectors (Liang, 2008; Poku & Zakari, 2013). A recent study (i.e. Saleem & Raja, 2014) shows that this evidence is strongly supported in the luxury hotels sector. This is probably because the multi-cultural nature of the customer-base of luxury hotels is stronger, as all these in the sample for this study have branches in different countries and tend to advertise their hotels worldwide.

Besides its increasing contribution to GDP, employment and tourism in Ghana (Poku & Zakari, 2013), the luxury hotel subsector is gradually expanding in terms of the number of hotels in it. Moreover, with the emergence of Moven Pick Hotel in the subsector recently the previously existing luxury hotels have to make additional effort to sustain their market position and market share. Also, Poku & Zakari (2013) recognise the multi-racial and cultural aspect of the customers of luxury hotels in Ghana. They indicate that a greater majority of customers of luxury hotels in Ghana are foreigners and consequently have multi-racial and cultural backgrounds. Based on the argument of Liang (2008), managements of luxury hotels in Ghana must therefore be able to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty by rendering services that cut across tribes, cultures, races and nationalities.

Turkson (2012) contends that before a firm can structure or restructure its service delivery to meet quality expectations of customers and retain customers, it needs to have an idea of the impacts of its current service quality level and how it influences customer loyalty through satisfaction. In this regard, Turkson (2012) suggests the need to examine the effect of customer satisfaction on retention, while incorporating the foundational role of service quality in this relationship. In view of the argument of Turkson (2012), it is irrefutable that the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana needs evidence which points to the effect of customer satisfaction on customer retention from the viewpoint of service quality. But any such evidence is incomplete without the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI), which is needed by service providers in highly multi-cultural settings (Pahuja & Sahi, 2012; Danquah, 2014b).

Researchers seem to have reached a consensus on the positive effect of emotional intelligence on service quality. This consensus is driven by consistent empirical findings that point to a strong positive effect of emotional intelligence on service delivery. It is argued based on empirical evidence that service quality cannot be attained without service providers demonstrating emotional intelligence in service delivery (Pahuja & Sahi, 2012; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). Moreover, studies have confirmed that EI is positively related to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and financial performance (Rehman, Khalid & Khan, 2012; Radha, Prasad, 2013; Danquah, 2014a; etc.). This evidence is credible because service quality is naturally the basis of customer satisfaction and loyalty, and financial performance in the service firm.

Considering empirical evidences available on the effect of EI on financial performance through the mediation of service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, any study aimed at investigating the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction, customer retention and financial performance in the luxury hotel sector must incorporate the role of EI. This is because EI is more credible to service firms with multi-cultural customer base (Danquah, 2014b; Radha, Prasad, 2013). The problem is that virtually all studies examining the relationships among service quality and customer satisfaction, customer loyalty in the luxury hotel sector relegate EI. From a personal viewpoint, this problem poses a major gap in the subject's literature.

This study is therefore conducted on the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana to examine the effect of EI on financial performance. Moreover, the role of service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in this relationship is considered in this paper. This study captures the influence of EI on financial performance because every organisation expects to achieve desired financial performance in the short and long runs.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper investigates the effect of Emotional Intelligence on business performance in terms of financial performance or return on investment (ROI) in the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana. The study also examines the mediating role of service quality (SQ), customer satisfaction (CS), and customer loyalty (CL).

This study contributes to the weak academic debate on the effect of EI on business performance through its positive effect on service quality (SQ), customer satisfaction (CS), and customer loyalty (CL) in the luxury hotel subsector. It also establishes empirical evidence on the relevance of EI to service delivery in the hospitality sector in Ghana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship marketing has been considered both at the levels of theory and empirical studies as the basis of service delivery (Porcu et al., 2012). In the services sector, firms largely deliver services through relationship marketing and personal selling (Porcu et al. 2012; Manisha, 2012). As a result, business performance is practically an outcome of relationship marketing and personal selling practices in the services sector (Porcu et al., 2012). The effectiveness of personal selling and relationship marketing in service delivery is impacted by some of service providers' competences (Manisha, 2012). Moreover, service providers' competences and skills are largely made up of Emotional Intelligence (Hashem, 2010; Kenbach & Nicola, 2005).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to identify, assess and control the emotions of oneself, of others and of groups (Harms & Credé, 2010). It was first defined by Mayer & Salovey (1997) as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's

thinking and actions" (p. 18). This definition was later modified by Mayer et al. (2001) to "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions towards personal growth" (p. 233). Other modern definitions and concepts of emotional intelligence are influenced by the above definitions and the works of Goleman (1995).

It is worth noting that the definition of EI makes little sense without being related to everyday life or practice. In view of this, Goleman (1995) relates it to "emotional competence", which is defined as "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence which results in outstanding performance at work". This definition gives a clue about a relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional competence. It suggests that emotional competence is learned, while this learning process is driven by emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) uses his definition and general thought on "emotional competence" to better explain the practical importance of emotional intelligence in business and career success.

Goleman (1995) identifies EI as an embodiment of five factors: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy and motivation. These factors are made up of twenty-five emotional competencies. Later, the five-factor EI framework was reviewed to constitute four factors (i.e. self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and social skill) with twenty emotional competencies. In the modified framework therefore, empathy and motivation are replaced with social awareness.

Mayer & Salovey (1997) also proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability to reason using emotions, the ability to understand emotion and the ability to manage emotions. The first step in understanding emotions is to accurately perceive them (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). In many cases, this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions. Reasoning with emotions is another basic aspect of emotional intelligence, and this involves using emotions to promote thinking and cognitive activity (Rahim & Malik, 2010; Mayer et al., 2001). Emotions help prioritize what a person pays attention and reacts to (Goleman, 1996), where one responds emotionally to things that garner his or her attention (Goleman, 1996; Porcu et al. 2012).

The practical importance of EI is its effect on service delivery. Both theoretical and empirical marketing literature strongly shows that EI positively influences service delivery (Kim, 2010; Komlosi, 2013), often in relationship marketing and personal selling (Velnampy & Sivesan, 2012). There is also substantial empirical evidence on the positive effect of EI on service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and business performance in terms of financial performance (Danquah, 2014a; Rehman et al., 2012). Thus service quality, customer satisfaction; customer loyalty and business performance in terms of financial performance are enhanced in a service firm when EI is demonstrated by customer service personnel in service delivery or in nurturing customer-organisation relationship.

The positive influence of EI on business performance through the mediation of relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and business performance in terms of financial performance is not limited to one sector. This is because various studies have confirmed the relationship from various sectorial perspectives. For instance; Danquah (2014a) has confirmed this relationship in the banking and telecommunication sectors in Ghana. Other researchers (e.g. Manisha, 2012; Radha & Prasad, 2013) have also confirmed it in other sectors such as banking, health and education. Komlosi (2013) is however of the belief that EI is more strongly related to relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and financial performance in the hospitality sector, precisely the luxury hotel subsector relative to other sectors. This argument is based on the culture-sensitive nature of EI and how this

harmonises with the multi-cultural attribute of the customer base of luxury hotels (Liang, 2008; Komlosi, 2013).

It is believed that service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are more sensitive to firm performance in the luxury hotel subsector because of the multi-cultural nature of the customers of luxury hotels (Liang, 2008). It is also empirically justified that EI makes the strongest effect on service delivery in the luxury hotel subsector owing to its culture-sensitive nature (Komlosi, 2013). Considering this fact, the relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are believed to be stronger in the luxury hotel sector when EI is applied in service delivery (Liang, 2008; Poku & Zakari, 2013; Saleem & Raja, 2014). The fact is that there is little empirical evidence that supports this claim in a global context. This anomaly is worse from a Ghanaian point of view. Moreover, studies which support this argument have been conducted outside Ghana and in developed country contexts. Generally, studies on the effect of EI on financial performance of service firms are uncommon (Danquah, 2014a). Academic debate in this respect is therefore weak. There is therefore the need to verify the effect of EI on business performance in terms of financial performance in the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana, with the role of service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty captured.

This paper therefore assesses the relationship between EI and service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and financial performance using data from the luxury hotel subsector. The study also examines the moderation of EI on the relationship between financial performance and service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The alternative hypotheses on which this study is conducted are as follows:

H_1: Emotional intelligence positively correlates to service quality in the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana.

H_2: Emotional intelligence positively correlates to customer satisfaction in the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana.

H_3: Emotional intelligence positively correlates to customer loyalty in the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana.

H_4: Emotional intelligence positively correlates to financial performance in the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana.

H_5: Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between financial performance and each of service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

In this study, a quantitative research approach was employed in view of the researcher's interest to adopt random sampling procedures and statistical inference that would form a basis of generalising results over the chosen population. The population of this study was employees (i.e. customer attendants) and customers of Moven Pick Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, La Palm Beach Hotel and Holiday Inn Hotel in Accra. These hotels mainly in Accra were chosen based on evidences from Ghana Tourist Board, that they collectively represent the luxury hotel subsector in Ghana. The sampling frame for employees was made up of customer attendants who had been working in their respective hotels for at least six months. Employees were expected to have been affiliated to their respective hotels for at least six months to ensure that their responses were influenced by sufficient experience obtained in service delivery. For the purpose of relishing the experience of customers about service delivery in the hotels, the sampling frame for customers was lodgers who had spent at least 10 nights in the hotels.

The number of employees (i.e. customer attendants) in the sampling frame was 521, whereas the number of customers estimated was 466. The sampling principle of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) suggests that a sample size of 210 is

appropriate for a population of about 460 people. By applying this sampling principle, a sample of 210 customers was chosen. Though the population of customer attendants did not correspond to 210 according to the sampling principle of Krejcie & Morgan (1970), this number was used as their sample size. Thus equal sample sizes of customers and customer attendants were needed to ensure that each data point of EI (measured using customer attendants) was matched to a data point of relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (measured using customer attendants).

Self-administered questionnaires for employees and customers were used to collect data. EI was measured using employees' questionnaire, which was based on the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (EIA) and Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) scales of Goleman (1995). Customer satisfaction (CS) and service quality (SQ) were measured with customers' questionnaire, which was based on the Zeithml et al. (1990) Service Delivery scale. Customer loyalty (CL) was measured using Ganiyu's (2012) scale. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to reduce the dimensions of EI, SQ, CS and CL.

Financial performance was measured in terms of return on investment (ROI). Current ROI figures were accessed from the management of the chosen hotels as secondary data and used in this study. It was assumed that these current ROI figures were reached as a result of service delivery in the firms in recent times. Hence, ROI figures of each hotel were corresponded to data on its SQ, CS and CL. However, ROI was treated as a dummy variable since the ROI value for each hotel needed to be duplicated to correspond to its SQ, CS and CL data.

In the process of collecting data, customers at the various hotels were asked to respond to questionnaires. Customers were made to respond after they had been served for at least 10 days and nights to ensure that they provided information based on their current experiences with service delivery. Service providers were made to provide responses after customers had done so. Data was collected by means of hand delivery of questionnaires in 14 working days across all chosen hotels. In data collection, some customers declined to respond to questionnaires evidently owing to lack of confidence in the study by foreign customers. Hence, 160 questionnaires were taken into data analysis out of 210. Thus this study's response rate was 76%.

Data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. This statistical software was used as a result of its robustness for relational analysis. The four hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation test and simple linear regression analysis. Pearson's correlation test was first used to identify the strength and nature of the relationship among variables. The regression analysis was then used to better relate dependent variables to independent variables. The partial correlation test was used to test for the moderating role of EI in the relationship between ROI and service quality, ROI and customer satisfaction, and ROI and customer loyalty. These statistical tools were used basically because data employed were continuous and were confirmed to be normally distributed using Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. Chronbach's alpha was used to verify the reliability of the research instruments used. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.921 (for employees' questionnaire) and 0.876 (for customers' questionnaire). The fact that data used in this study were reliable and normally distributed was a basis for reaching valid research conclusions. Results of the study are presented in the next section.

FINDINGS

To start with, this study seeks to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on business performance in terms of financial performance in the hospitality (i.e. luxury hotels) sector in Ghana. The study also assesses the moderating role of EI in the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and business performance in terms of ROI. In this section, results of the study are presented. Results are presented based on the assumption that data employed in this study was drawn from a normally distributed population. Hence, the Shapiro Wilk's test of normality is used to verify the normality of data as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Normality Test

Variable	N	Statistic	p-Value
EI	160	0.201	0.322
SQ	160	0.156	0.109
CS	160	0.675	0.098
CL	160	0.234	0.213
ROI	160	0.136	0.762

Table 1 shows the Shapiro Wilk's test of normality. The default null hypothesis is that data associated with each variable is normally distributed, or is drawn from a normal population. This null hypothesis is tested at 5% significance level. The general rule of thumb is that the p-value of a variable must be greater than 5% if its data is normally distributed. From the table, this condition is satisfied for all variables. This implies that data on which this study's results are based is normally distributed. This provides a basis for reaching valid results and conclusions. Table 2 shows descriptive statistics that tell the level of emotional intelligence practiced in the chosen hotels.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Observations	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
EI	160	1.000	4.000	2.700	1.103
SQ	160	1.000	5.000	3.400	1.467
CS	160	0.000	4.000	2.400	1.245
CL	160	0.000	5.000	3.150	1.356
ROI	160	0.100	0.540	0.280	0.135

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics associated with EI, SQ, CS, CL and return on investment. From the table, the level of emotional intelligence practiced in the hotels is close to average (M = 2.70, SD = 1.10). Moreover, the level of service quality is quite high (M = 3.40, SD = 1.45), likewise customer loyalty (M = 3.15, SD = 1.36). Customer satisfaction is however low (M = 2.40, SD = 1.25). The firms have an average ROI of 28%, which suggests that the participating luxury hotels had considerable return on investment. To get a better understanding of the relevance of EI to business performance, there is the need to take a look at its relationship with SQ, CS, CL and ROI. In the next table, the correlations among these variables are identified.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	EI	SQ	CS	CL	ROI
EI	1	0.945	0.894	0.804	0.724
SQ	0.945	1	0.876	0.829	0.628
CS	0.894	0.876	1	0.799	0.554
CL	0.804	0.829	0.799	1	0.411
ROI	0.724	0.628	0.554	0.411	1

Note: Correlations are significant at 5% significance level

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix of EI, SQ, CS, CL and ROI. From the table, EI is strongly positively correlated to SQ at 5% significant level (r = .945, p < .05). Moreover, EI is strongly positively correlated to CS (r = .894, p < .05), CL (r = .804, p < .05) and ROI (r = .724, p < .05) at 5% significance level. Evidently, service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and return on investment are enhanced when emotional intelligence is better practiced in the luxury hotels. In essence, the effect of EI on businesses is not limited to SQ, CS and CL; but this effect is extended to financial performance in terms of return on investment. Table 4 shows regression estimates for the relationship between EI and each of SQ, CS, CL and ROI.

Table 4: Regression Estimates with EI as Predictor

Predictor	Outcome Variable	R Square	ANOVA		Coefficients			
			F	p-Value	B	Intercept	t	P Value
EI	SQ	0.892	1308.00	.000	1.256	0.008	36.17	.000
EI	CS	0.799	627.11	.000	1.008	-0.320	25.042	.000
EI	CL	0.646	288.066	.000	0.988	0.483	16.973	.000
EI	ROI	0.525	174.378	.000	0.088	0.041	13.205	.000

In Table 4, EI serves as a predictor of SQ, CS, CL and ROI. From the table, EI significantly predicts SQ (t = 36.17, p < .05), where it accounts for about 89.2% of the variation in SQ. Moreover, EI significantly predicts CS (t = 25.04, p < .05), where it accounts for 79.9% of the variation in CS. EI significantly predicts CL (t = 16.97, p < .05) and ROI (t = 13.21, p < .05), where it accounts for 64.6% and 52.5% of the variation in CL and ROI respectively. It can be seen that the variation accounted by EI decreases from SQ through CS to ROI. This is logical because EI is practically demonstrated and felt during service delivery; so its effect would be stronger at the level of service quality relative to CS and CL.

From Table 3, EI is highly correlated to SQ, CS and CL. Possibly therefore; EI moderates the relationship between ROI and these variables. Table 5 shows results of a partial correlations test that verifies the moderation role of EI in the relationship between SQ and ROI, CS and ROI, and CL and ROI.

Table 5: Partial Correlations

Predictor	Outcome Variable	Controlled Variable	Original r	Change in r	Controlled r	Controlled sig.
SQ			0.628	0.567	0.061	.987
CS	ROI	EI	0.554	0.231	0.323	.033
CL			0.411	0.149	0.262	.065

Table 5 shows the partial correlations test in which the moderation role of EI in the relationship between SQ and ROI, CS and ROI, and CL and ROI is examined. This test is used to identify the strength of the relationship between SQ and ROI, CS and ROI, and CL and ROI when no EI is applied in service delivery. From the table, the relationship between SQ and ROI falls from 0.628 to 0.061 when EI is controlled for, or when EI is not applied in service delivery. This means that SQ does not affect business performance in terms of ROI when EI does not influence SQ. In other words, EI does not directly influence ROI without the mediation of service quality. Also, the correlation between CS and ROI falls from 0.554 to 0.323 when EI is controlled for. Though the correlation is still significant in this respect, there is a major decline in the strength of the relationship between the two variables when EI does not influence CS and ROI. Also, the correlation between CS and ROI still remains significant when EI is controlled for possibly because EI is not as strongly related to CS as SQ. Moreover, EI might not be the only major driver of CS and ROI in practice. Also, the correlation between CL and

ROI falls from 0.411 to 0.262 when EI is controlled for. In this situation, the correlation is not significant at 5% significant level. This means that SQ, CS and CL make significant effect on business performance in terms of ROI when EI is demonstrated in service delivery.

Consequently, EI makes direct and indirect effects on business performance in terms of ROI. It directly influences ROI by significantly predicting it (t = 13.21, p < .05) at 5% significance level, with a variation of 52.5% accounted. It indirectly affects ROI by significantly influencing SQ, CS and CL which largely drive ROI in a positive dimension.

DISCUSSIONS

This study confirms a strong positive effect of emotional intelligence on business performance in terms of financial performance in the hospitality sector in Ghana. Invariably, business performance is improved when customer care personnel of the hospitality sector apply emotional intelligence in service delivery. The subject's literature indicates that the effect of emotional intelligence on financial performance is basically mediated by relationship marketing (Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Komlosi, 2013; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). Yet, relationship marketing can only lead to organisational growth through service quality and customer satisfaction (Yaghoubi et al., 2011). Moreover, the relationship between RM and customer satisfaction is confirmed in the literature to be mediated by service quality (Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Komlosi, 2013; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). This is supported by the finding that service quality is strongly positively influenced by EI in the hospitality sector in Ghana.

This study additionally confirms an extension of the effect of EI on service quality to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Thus EI is also positively correlated to CS and CSL in the hospitality sector in Ghana. The only supporting evidence in the context of the hotel sector in this respect comes from the study of Komlosi (2013). Findings in several other studies have a bearing with this evidence in the banking (Danquah, 2014a; Manisha, 2012; etc.), hospitality (Komlosi, 2013), telecommunication and healthcare sectors (Martins et al., 2010; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014).

Findings in this study can also be reckoned in terms of the mediation of SQ, CS and customer loyalty. Thus EI does not make any significant effect on financial performance when it has not impacted SQ, CS and customer loyalty. This finding is supported by Yaghoubi et al. (2011) in a foreign country context. In a Ghanaian context, Danquah (2014a) and Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014) confirm this evidence in the banking and telecommunication sectors respectively. There is therefore ample evidence to say that EI impacts business performance in the hospitality sector in Ghana through its positive effect on service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that EI positively influences service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and financial performance in the luxury hotels sector in Ghana. This conclusion is made based on the result that EI is strongly positively correlated to SQ (r = .945, p < .05), CS (r = .894, p < .05), CL (r = .804, p < .05) and ROI (r = .724, p < .05) at 5% significance level. This suggests that service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and return on investment are enhanced when emotional intelligence is better practiced in the luxury hotels. Moreover, EI significantly predicts SQ (t = 36.17, p < .05), CS (t = 25.04, p < .05), CL (t = 16.97, p < .05) and ROI (t = 13.21, p < .05). The effect accounted by EI decreases from SQ through CS to ROI. This situation is logically because EI is demonstrated and felt during service delivery; so its effect would be stronger at the level of service quality relative to CS, CL and ROI.

The relationship between EI and financial performance is mediated by service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Invariably, the relationship between financial performance or ROI and each of SQ, CS and CL is moderated by EI.

Shortly, EI makes direct and indirect effects on business performance in terms of ROI. It directly influences ROI by significantly predicting it (t = 13.21, p < .05) at 5% significance level, with a variation of 52.5% accounted. It indirectly affects ROI by significantly influencing SQ, CS and CL which largely drive ROI in a positive dimension. Based on its demonstrated importance in the performance of the hospitality industry, managements in the sector should appreciate the importance of investing in the acquisition of EI skills by their staff, particularly the frontline staff.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's results are infiltrated by some limitations that must be acknowledged. The most primary of these limitations is the fact that some luxury hotels were not included in the study. Moreover, luxury hotels do not sufficiently represent the hospitality sector, considering the fact that other low-grade hotels, restaurants and leisure centres are part of this sector. Consequently, results of this study weakly reflect the application of EI in the hospitality sector in Ghana. Secondly, most respondents of this study were foreigners. So it is inappropriate to say that this study's results wholly apply to Ghana.

Generally, luxury hotels are encouraged to equip their customer attendants with emotional intelligence. They should also encourage and train their customer attendants to demonstrate or apply their emotional intelligence when attending to customers. It is recommended that future studies capture hotels, leisure centres, and restaurants of all classes. There is also the need to control for items of culture in future studies since this construct possibly makes a major effect on EI and service delivery in the hospitality sector.

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